

Water Pollution Control Authority
October 26, 2011
Regular Meeting
Town Hall – Council Chambers

Members Present: Mr. Steve Eberle
Mr. Walter Gancarz
Mr. Mark Korman
Mr. Tim Pelton (Chairman)
Mr. Thomas Scannell
Mr. Mark Witek

Members Absent: Mr. John Perrotti

Others Present: Mr. Joseph Michelangelo, Director of Public Works
Mr. Donald Chelton, AECOM
Mr. Jon Pearson, AECOM
Mr. David Schrumm, Town Council Liaison (8:30)
Town Attorney Andrew Lord

Chairman Pelton called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Roll was called and a quorum determined. The assembled group recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Pelton explained to the audience how to exit the chamber in the event of an emergency, in compliance with the Fire Marshal's order.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications to come before the Authority.

APPLICATIONS

There were no applications to come before the Authority.

CALL FOR PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Michelangelo addressed the Authority to discuss the proposed sewer user fee for next year. It will be necessary to call a public hearing for next month to receive input from the public regarding the proposed fee.

Mr. Michelangelo explained that there are three components or classes of sewer users. The first are residential users of which there are 4,883. The second is commercial and industrial users, which totals approximately 432. The last component is the Connecticut Correctional Facility.

The method for computing the sewer user fee is derived from dividing the number of equivalent single family units by the revenue needed to be raised to run the sewer plant

and other related expenses. Calculating that fee using the above numbers would result in an exact fee of \$341.09. Mr. Michelangelo presented a detailed Wastewater Treatment Plant analysis for 2011-12. He stated that a \$5.00 fee increase results in a \$41,121.00 increase in revenue.

Authority members discussed the possibility of granting eligible seniors some relief from the sewer user fee. Attorney Lord explained that there are two different types of relief, one that relates to a sliding income scale and another that relates to age, income and disability. He offered that it would be less cumbersome to use the same criteria that the Town uses for tax relief, as eligibility has already been established. Drafting an Ordinance would not be a difficult process.

Mr. Pelton agreed that it would not be wise to develop a process which will be redundant in administration duties. In response to a query from the Authority, Attorney Knott stated that the process which would be easiest to administer would be to freeze the fee at the time it is implemented. The freeze would disappear when the property is sold.

Mr. Korman stated that he disagrees with the principle of offering relief of the sewer user fee to seniors who qualify. He noted that there are other services in Town which offer relief to the elderly, specifically tax relief. He questioned whether other utilities offer this relief to seniors, i.e., electricity or heat. Mr. Eberle commented that utilities such as those can be controlled, whereas the sewer use is the same for everyone.

Mr. Korman stated that giving relief such as proposed shifts the costs to the general population, and increases over time. There are also administrative costs which must be factored in. In response to a query from Mr. Eberle, Mr. Michelangelo stated that there are 300 property owners who take advantage of the tax freeze, and 450 property owners who utilize the credit program.

Although Mr. Gancarz noted that Mr. Korman brought up a good point, he noted that the Town has chosen not to meter sewer use because of the expense involved. Seniors usually use a smaller disproportionate amount than other property owners, and this would be one way to make up for that.

Mr. Pelton noted that in this political climate it would be nice to offer something to the seniors, especially in light of the upcoming referendum. Mr. Witek agreed that it would be good to give a break to those who most likely use the sewer the least.

In response to a query from Mr. Pelton, Attorney Lord commented that he does not have a draft Ordinance prepared, but will do so if instructed by the Authority. He will draft an Ordinance which will be presented to the Town Council for approval.

Mr. Michelangelo stated that he is hopeful that the rate can be set before November 16 meeting, as the Town Council will not have a meeting before that date to consider it. A discussion ensued regarding whether property owners should have to apply for the freeze, and after discussion it was the consensus of the Authority that it would be redundant to

do so. There is a list available which is used for tax relief which can be applied to the sewer use fee freeze. Mr. Michelangelo stated that bills are usually sent out by December 1 and are due on January 1.

Authority members discussed what the sewer use fee should be. Mr. Witek questioned whether the Authority is contributing to overtaxing property owners who are already overburdened with other taxes.

Mr. Eberle moved that the Water Pollution Control Authority call for a Public Hearing at the regular monthly meeting on November 16, 2011 to set the sewer use fee not to exceed \$340.00. The motion was seconded by Mr. Scannell.

Discussion of Motion:

Mr. Gancarz offered that a fee of \$345.00 would be more in line with the projected costs as presented by Mr. Michelangelo at this meeting. That would be a 3% increase over last year, which is not unreasonable. Mr. Eberle disagreed, noting that the Town Council controls the budget and the Authority should not have to set fees based on their spending proposals. He feels that the number should be held at \$340.00.

Mr. Scannell and Mr. Gancarz stated that costs for the treatment plant have risen, and based on figures presented, \$340.00 would not be enough to cover increased costs.

Vote on Motion: Failed, 1-5. Mr. Eberle voted in favor, citing reasons previously stated.

Mr. Pelton moved that the Water Pollution Control Authority call for a Public Hearing at the regular monthly meeting on November 16, 2011 to set the sewer use fee not to exceed \$345.00. The motion was seconded by Mr. Scannell and carried 5-1. Mr. Eberle voted in opposition.

Mr. Pelton moved that the Water Pollution Control Authority request Attorney Lord to draft an Ordinance for a tax freeze program relating to the sewer user fee for eligible seniors, based on Section 17.6 of the Town Ordinance, at the rate approved annually by the Water Pollution Control Authority. The motion was seconded by Mr. Scannell and carried 5-1. Mr. Korman voted in opposition citing concerns stated earlier in the meeting.

In reviewing the WPCA Ordinance, Mr. Gancarz noted that there is a charge of \$100 per day which can be levied on property owners who illegally connect their sump pumps to the sewer. It was previously thought that the fee was nominal.

Mixville Pump Station

Mr. Michelangelo stated that this project is complete and approximately two months into the warranty period.

WPCD Influent Pump Station Project

Mr. Chelton stated that this project is in the warranty period.

Mr. Pelton moved that the Water Pollution Control Authority approve Invoice #37173950, dated October 19, 2011, in the amount of \$1,830.58 for work relating to the WPCD Influent Pump Station Project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Scannell and carried unanimously.

In response to a query from Mr. Eberle, Mr. Chelton stated that the only items remaining are a few small punch list items and some documents that AECOM has to deliver.

WPCD Upgrade Design

Mr. Chelton stated that at last month's meeting and discussion thereafter, it was decided not to include phosphorous removal in the upgrade design of the plant. Mr. Chelton invited Mr. Jon Pearson of AECOM to discuss the ramifications of this decision so the Authority has all of the facts regarding this matter. He wants the Authority to be aware that if phosphorous removal is not put in at this time, it is going to cost more to do it at a later date.

Mr. Pearson explained in detail the ramifications of eliminating the disc filter from design of the plant upgrade. He stated that the design will be modified to delete the disc filters and the building that would house them. Mr. Pearson recommended that the chemical addition for phosphorus removal still be included in the design. This could help the Town to qualify for State funding priority list points in the future.

The building size will be reduced to the space required to house the UV disinfection system, the electrical room and the storage room. Mr. Pearson detailed the design changes that will be necessary to implement the elimination of phosphorus removal. AECOM is recommending a new building for the UV structure. It may be necessary to add more diffusers. Mr. Pearson also recommended that the plumbing be installed for future use if necessary.

In response to a query from Mr. Scannell, Mr. Pearson stated that elimination of the disc filters will reduce the project by approximately 4 M, but there would be associated increases in cost in other areas. Mr. Chelton noted that if the disc filters are added at a later date, it could cost at least 4.5M or 5M if inflation is taken into consideration. Mr. Gancarz noted that operating costs are unknown at this time.

In response to a query from Mr. Witek, Mr. Pearson stated that there will not be any operations affected by moving the aeration tanks. Mr. Pelton offered that if the project is delayed, in the intervening years there may be other suppliers of the disc filters, which may result in decreased costs and more choices. There are many variables that will come into play, none of which are known at this time.

In response to a query from Mr. Pelton, Attorney Lord stated that there are no legal ramifications to delaying phosphorus removal, as there is no limit in the Town's permit at this time. There may be pressure points down the road, but there is a process to appeal any decisions made by DEP regarding the Town's permit.

Mr. Gancarz commented that based upon the comments from value engineering, it may be possible to meet the phosphorus limit without disc filters. That could now be monitored. That represents a valid reason for holding off on phosphorus removal at this time.

In response to a query from Mr. Chelton, it was the consensus of the Authority to keep the chemical addition for phosphorus removal in the design. Mr. Witek offered that it may be possible to build the infrastructure for removal of phosphorus, but not activate it. Mr. Chelton commented that the cost of the chemical system is not significant.

Regarding discussion that the project may come in under the referendum amount of 30M, Mr. Chelton stated that AECOM does not agree with that statement and sticks by their original estimate of 3.2M, and it may be even higher. Mr. Pelton offered that the cost of chemical addition is small in comparison to the benefit of designing for it now.

Mr. Korman expressed his displeasure that the State Representatives did not get the legislation changed regarding this issue, especially the contribution from the CCI. It was noted that a four-year clock will start once the next DEP permit is issued to the Town.

In response to a query from Mr. Eberle, Mr. Schrumm stated that if the referendum fails, then the project is on hold until next November, or until something serious happens with a failure at the plant that must be fixed in the interest of public health. Also, if there is a decree to move forward from the DEP, then the project would have to move forward. It was noted that design may be completed without referendum approval. Mr. Chelton stated that his firm will complete design, and if the project does not move forward at this time the plans will remain on file.

Mr. Gancarz moved that the Water Pollution Control Authority approve the design modification of the Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade in accordance with the letter from AECOM dated October 19, 2011. The motion was seconded by Mr. Eberle and carried unanimously.

Mr. Pelton moved that the Water Pollution Control Authority approve Invoice #37173315 of AECOM in the amount of \$46,361.45 for work relating to the

WPCD Upgrade Design Project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Witek and carried unanimously.

Mr. Chelton informed the Authority that he received communication from the DEP regarding Phases I & II of the Facilities Plan. He stated that AECOM has not had time to digest the report and will discuss it at the next meeting. This is a big step forward for the Authority. Mr. Gancarz inquired as to whether the Town was copied on the report. Mr. Chelton will check and forward a copy if necessary.

I & I Interceptor Manhole Rehabilitation Project

Mr. Chelton reported that the manhole rehabilitation project is complete, but there were a few leaks which needed to be repaired. Work is complete and he is recommending that the contractor's invoice be paid.

Mr. Pelton moved that the Water Pollution Control Authority approve Estimate #6 of VMS, dated October 21, 2011, in the amount of \$3,000.00 for work relating to the I & I Interceptor manhole Rehabilitation Project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Witek and carried unanimously.

Cook Hill Road Pump Station Design

Mr. Michelangelo stated that Wright Pierce has completed the preliminary design report. It is currently being reviewed by staff and a report will be presented at the next meeting.

Mr. Pelton moved that the Water Pollution Control Authority approve Invoice #79144, dated September 26, 2011, in the amount of \$972.00 for work relating to the Cook Hill Road Pump Station Design Project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Witek and carried unanimously.

West Johnson Avenue Pump Station Project

Mr. Chelton reported that AECOM is finishing up the concept report and will present it at the next meeting.

Mr. Pelton moved that the Water Pollution Control Authority approve Estimate #37173699, dated October 18, 2011, in the amount of \$13,200.00 for work relating to the West Johnson Avenue Pump Station Project. The motion was seconded by Mr. Witek and carried unanimously.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Removing Phosphorus Technology

This was discussed previously at this meeting.

Revenue from Application Fees

Mr. Michelangelo informed the Authority that his office is proposing to institute fees relating to processing WPCA applications, since there is currently no procedure in place. Attorney Lord stated that this would not involve a change in the Ordinance, but would be a change in the Regulations and can be approved through the normal course of WPCA procedures.

There are two types of fees; those which apply to residential permits and those which apply to commercial and industrial applications. A mixed use application would only require one fee.

Mr. Gancarz recommended billing monthly for dewatering rather than on a quarterly basis. In response to a query from Mr. Eberle, it was noted that this fee will cover the costs of processing the applications, not any necessary engineering review which may be necessary for some projects.

It was agreed that members will review this proposal and discuss at the next meeting.

Sump Pump Committee

There was nothing to review relating to this committee at this time.

CCI Effluent Sample

Mr. Michelangelo informed the Authority that the effluent sample from the CCI reveals that there is a higher percentage of phosphorous present than in the regular Town effluent. This presents additional evidence that the CCI should be increasing the amount the Town receives from the State for sewer fees for the prison. Phosphorous is approximately 50% higher in the CCI sample.

NEW BUSINESS

Riverside Drive/Applewood Drive Assessments

Mr. Michelangelo reminded the Authority that sewers were installed and completed to Oxford Court, a portion of Riverside Drive, Applewood Drive and Bridget's Lane this summer. The total cost of the project was \$386,644.08, which was paid directly to the contractor. Members noted that there was one additional property added to this project at an unexpected cost of \$66,357.24. It was the consensus of the Authority that the cost of that sewer should not be factored into the assessment of other properties.

Mr. Michelangelo stated that total costs of a sewer project are never recovered in assessments, with 80% cost recovery on average. The most recent assessment was the Glenbrook Drive assessment which was \$9,500 per property owner. Mr. Witek offered that it would be productive to know what the average septic system installation would be.

Mr. Gancarz stated that replacement of a septic system would be approximately \$20,000.

Authority members discussed whether there should be an independent appraisal of properties done, as the assessment is related to the increased benefit to the property. Mr. Pelton stated that he would investigate the historical data regarding assessments. Attorney Knott informed the Authority that property owners have the right of appeal if they feel that the benefit to the property is not equal to the assessment charge.

Mr. Pelton will work with staff to investigate the assessment charge and make a recommendation at the next meeting.

Approval Protocol

Mr. Pelton stated that there has been an issue recently with applications being presented for more than one approval at the same meeting. The procedure should be for the Authority to consider conceptual approval first, followed by final design approval and award of capacity. They should be done over time so Authority members have time to review and investigate applications.

Chesprocott

Authority members received copies of the monthly report from Chesprocott detailing septic system failures and repairs for the month of September. No major issues were reported.

Mr. Pelton reminded members that the next meeting will be November 16, 2011.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Pelton moved that the minutes of the regular monthly meeting of September 28, 2011, be approved as published, subject to correction. The motion was seconded by Mr. Scannell and carried 3-0-2. Mr. Gancarz and Mr. Korman abstained.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Scannell moved that the Water Pollution Control Authority adjourn at 9:15 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gancarz and carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Pelton, Chairman
Water Pollution Control Authority

Attest:

Susan F. Zwick

Distribution:

Members: W.P.C.A.
Michael Milone, Town Manager
David Schrumm, Town Council Liaison
Andrew Lord, Town Attorney
Donald Chelton/Jon Pearson, AECOM
Joseph Michelangelo, Ex-Officio Member
George Noewatne, Operations Manager
Dennis Dievert, Superintendent [WPCD](#)
Susan Zwick, Recording Secretary

